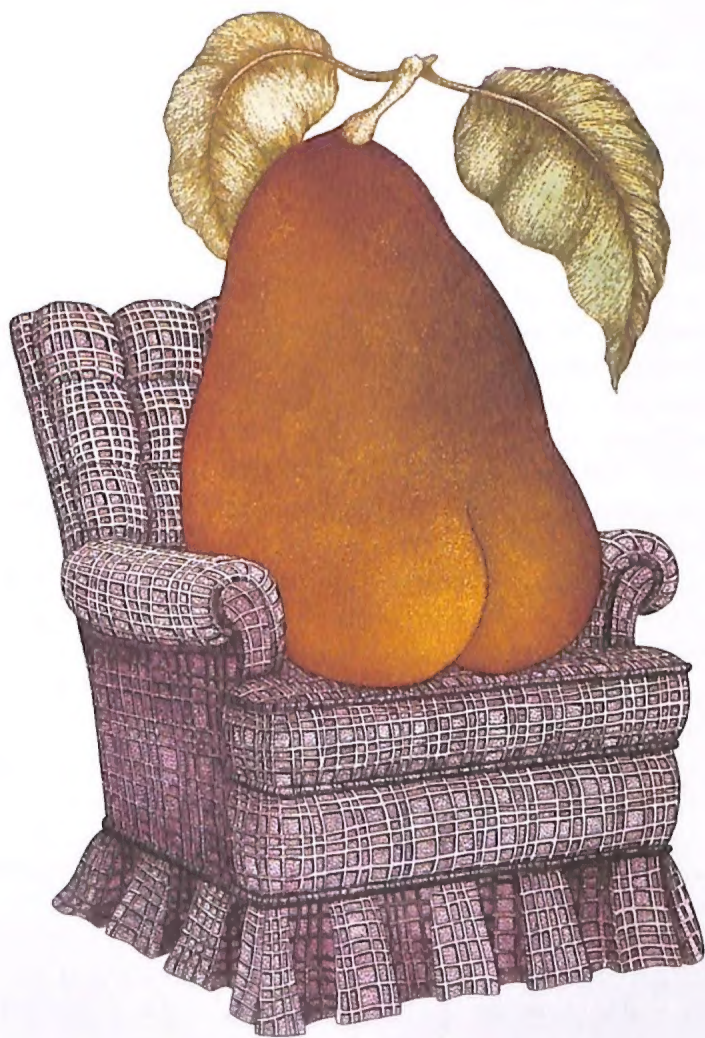


PERMANENT COLLECTION

AGPA PORTFOLIOS

The Body



Juan Calderón, *I Will Die in Paris with Despair*, 1978, Etching, 76 x 56 cm



AGPA PORTFOLIOS

The Body

December 2016 - July 2017

Gallery E

Since its origins, art has served humankind as a space for invocation and self-representation, as a way to understand the complexity of life and the world, as well as the experience of humanity in it. Humans have seen themselves, through the representation of the body, in all the possibilities of what being alive and dead means, in fictional or real scenarios, and in all times and circumstances. In the arts, humankind has been through it all. It is precisely because of that, that the representation of the body has also predetermined, and in some cases even restricted or conditioned, the idea and the expression of the body itself.

To revise *the body* in a group of art works implies to make conscious the possibilities and contradictions that exist in its representation; some pieces reaffirm notions of the body that are now being questioned – think about the history of female nude – while others take a chance on new ways of thinking and living the body, forms that have detached themselves from academic formalities and stick to its expressive and existential multiplicity. Perhaps the most important thing is to understand that the way in which the body is depicted corresponds to the idea that one has about it, about how it behaves and how it presents itself.

The second half of the 20th century, with its heterogenic manifestations of thinking, promoted, amongst others, the feminism thesis, postcolonial studies, and queer theories, and also brought the emancipation of the body in regards to its historical burden and the way in which it was represented. This derived in a body that is able to act, has agency, and is political as it embodies the potential for change in society. It is in this light, that we present works from the AGPA Portfolios in which the human figure, as mentioned before, is protagonist.

The engravings presented in Gallery E of the *Expansión* building of MAMM, show bodies and parts of bodies that belong to diverse lines of artistic creation and are part of an installation that rescues the symbolic potential of the body, its circumstances and, through direct comparison and association, open the possibility for criticism: to speak, research and delve deeper into it, and its context.

In this sense, there are pieces in which the human figure is used as a strategy for speaking about the human condition, its struggles, suffering and even its health, like in Jorge Mantilla Caballero's (*Untitled*, 1977). There is also socially engaged art like that of Pablo O'Higgins (*La ciudad lejana* [Distant City], 1973), and other pieces that rescue the pleasure that has long been repressed like an intrinsic condition of the body: Miguel Ángel Rojas (*Blue jean*, 1973), Flor María Bahout (from the series *Los amantes* [The Lovers], 1984) and Luis López Loza (*Colores alternando personajes* [Colors Alternating Characters], 1972), amongst others.

Within society, the human body has been a political entity and, to that extent, we have found that through it the political circumstances of the moment where the pieces were created can also be transmitted: Oswaldo Guayasamín (*El grito* [Scream], 1978), Beatriz González's (*Les majesté* [Lèse-majesté], 1974) and Roberto Cabrera (*Contrastes* [Contrasts], 1974) are just a few examples. Other pieces appeal to poetry to bring back one of the main questions of humanity, one that has no definitive answer: what does it mean to be alive? The works of Corina Briceño (*Antes de ser uno más* [Before Being One More], 1975), Francisco Zúñiga (*Mujer sentada con rebozo* [Seated Woman with Blanket], 1973) and Santiago Cárdenas (*Él* [Him], 1972), might fit within this group.

This is just an excerpt of the context that sheds light to how the human figure has played a fundamental role, in art history and in that of the AGPA portfolios, and how it continues to do so. These pieces bring awareness of how the human figure embodies cultural, ideological and political discourses of humankind.

When depicting people, it becomes evident what is thought about them on a personal level but also, and perhaps more importantly, about the human categories to which they belong. In figuration and in the body we discover the world, and at the same time, we confess our vision of it.

AGPA Portfolios

The history of the Pan-American Graphic Arts (*Artes Gráficas Panamericanas -AGPA*) portfolios began in 1971 when *Cartón y Papel de México* commissioned ten Mexican artists an original engraving each. The following year, with the addition of two of the company's subsidiaries, *Cartón de Colombia* and *Cartón de Venezuela*, the program grew in reach and importance: *Smurfit Cartón de Colombia* gathered a group of Latin American artists, commissioning an original artwork from each one of them, and thus creating the first AGPA portfolio in the country. In 1973, additional artists from Spain and other Latin American countries were invited to participate. Over the course of a few years, the collection, originally made of Mexican pieces, broadened its portfolio to draw from all of Latin America, the United States and several European countries (France, Belgium, Spain and Italy). The program was called *Artes Gráficas Panamericanas* (Pan-American Graphic Arts) and was composed of the portfolios produced by the 3 countries with a broad geographic vision where the Panamerican did not exclude the global.

For the Medellín Museum of Modern Art, the AGPA portfolios constitute a landscape of the thriving field of graphic arts in the region at the end of the 20th century. With an international view, yet grounded in Latin American culture, these portfolios include some of the most relevant Latin American artists of the last four decades: Álvaro Barrios, Beatriz González, Luis Díaz, Wilfredo Lam, Liliana Porter and Omar Rayo, just to name a few. These artists represent all the printmaking schools and techniques, but more than an anthology, they make up a repertoire of the possibilities of printmaking, guided by criteria of quality and open to eclecticism. Thus, the collection provides a first approach to the artistic production of Latin America during an important part of the Museum's history, which is particularly relevant at this moment of dialogue with the rest of the continent and the world.



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